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School Committee Minutes 05/10/2005

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY MAY 10, 2005
7:30 P.M.

Present: Jeff Thielman, Chair Susan Lovelace
Suzanne Owayda, Secretary Paul Schlichtman
Sean Garballey Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry
Sp. Ed. Director Marilyn Bisbicos

Absent: Sue Sheffler
Rob Addelson

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

IMPACT STATEMENTS – SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Elementary principals, Alan Brown, Martha Batten, Steve Carme, Mike McCabe, Bob Penta, Dallin School Liaison, John Chicarello, OMS principal, Stavroula Bouris and AHS Principal, Charlie Skidmore addressed the committee and spoke to the budgetary impact of what a failed override would mean for their schools

DALLIN SCHOOL SAFETY COMMITTEE

Members of the Dallin School Safety Committee addressed the Committee relative to their concerns on crosswalks and safe accessibility to the school for students and community members.

The summary of their recommendations include:

- .. Pedestrian Safety and community Access
- .. Sidewalk and Roadway Deficiencies, and ADA Compliance
- .. Reduction of Vehicle Speed and Improvement of Traffic Management

The safety committee has met with the PTBC and the Dallin PTO, both are supportive of the proposal. Next steps include meeting with the (TAC) Traffic Advisory Committee. Mr. Schlichtman suggested that the committee contact the TAC and present some of the issues as urgent priority, i.e. uncontrolled intersection, and request that they(TAC) take emergency action by putting up school zone signs and stop signs.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Schlichtman

Voted that the School Committee endorses the efforts of the Dallin School Safety Committee. 6-0.

Consent Agenda All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered

to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

***Approval of Minutes: Organizational Meeting of April 12, 2005 and the Regular meeting minutes of April 12, 2005**

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was
Voted to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. 6-0

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

• **Town Meeting Update** – Supt. Donovan reported that the State of Schools address would take place on May 16th. Mrs. Donovan announced that the Madrigal Singers would open Town Meeting. At Town Meeting Supt. Donovan and the School Committee will be given 10 minutes to speak to their budgets; with and without the override.

Supt. Donovan presented to Town Meeting the Home Rule Petition that would allow the school clerical staff to be removed from Civil Service. TM member Mr. Roselli did not approve of the petition stating that he did not believe that the clerical unit understood the ramifications of their action. The Superintendent will prepare a statement for the secretaries to sign acknowledging their support of the petition.

• **School Choice Vote**

Supt. Donovan requested a voted from the Committee not to support school choice for APS.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was
Voted that Arlington Public Schools not participate as a school choice as we do not have the space, the need, or the desire as a community to open our schools. Unanimous vote 6-0

• **Legislative Update**

Mrs. Donovan reported that the House of Representatives voted to add \$50.00 per child to our Chapter 70 funds, however that has not been approved by the Senate. The Superintendent is still waiting to meet with Senator Travaglini.

• **Contract for Brackett School Principal**

Supt. Donovan included a copy of Ms. Batten's current contract in the school committee as requested and stated that Ms. Batten's contract has been extended. Mr. Thrope stated that the committee must vote the new contract.

Mr. Thrope believed that according to policy GCF, GCB and the AEA contract the job should have been posted. Mr. Thrope did note that his concerns were not with Ms. Batten or her contract but with the violation of the policy and terms of the AEA contract. Ms. Owayda stated that the policy was followed, that there was a search committee for an interim principal and that Mrs. Donovan had the authority to appoint Ms. Batten to the position permanently.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was
Voted to accept the contract of Martha Batten as principal of Brackett School. 5-1 (Mr. Thrope voted no for reasons noted above).

• **Approval of Foreign Exchange Program**

Supt. Donovan requested approval for the AHS Juniors Honors French class to be part of a foreign exchange trip to France. The students would visit during April vacation missing one day of school. Mrs. Donovan explained that the students would stay with host families and attend school during the week; in turn the students from France would visit Arlington during the academic year and stay with our students.

The Superintendent stated that Mr. Levenson has been informed of the proposal and is supportive of the trip.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Garballey it was
Voted to approve the Foreign exchange trip as presented. Unanimous.

PERMANENT TOWN BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Thrope noted that the packet included the summary text of the project manager's analysis of the schedule of the Dallin School building as submitted by the contractor. Mr. Thrope reported that the School Committee should be aware that the PTBC is looking for the contractor to complete two high dollar value months in a row to get a better sense that the contractor will bring the project in on time. Mr. Thrope believed that the PTBC will do whatever is necessary to bring the project in on time, however Mr. Thorpe's recommendation is to fund the principal and other related positions but hold off on hiring a decision for a few months to see how the contractor's performance is tracking.

Supt. Donovan reported that the PTBC is seeking a variance from the ADA on the handicap ramp at the Peirce School. Mrs. Donovan requested two students to demonstrate on video their ability to maneuver the ramp. The ADA has requested to see one more student demonstrate accessibility in a non-mechanical wheelchair.

• **Approval of Warrant**

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Voted to approve warrant #05149 in the amount of \$885,998.39. 5-1-0 (abstention by Mr. Garballey due to a conflict
Break

COMMITTEE REPORTS

• **Policy & Procedures** The next scheduled meeting is May 12th at 5:30 pm.

• **Selectmen Liaison** – Mr. Schlichtman reported that the Board of Selectmen voted no action on Article 6 of the April 27th Special town Meeting/Public Memorial Committee and that in addition the majority of the Board of Selectmen voted to send the McClellan Park naming to the Public Memorial Committee for review. .

• **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment** - Ms. Owayda reported that the subcommittee met to get ideas and information to help set the course for the current school committee year. Mr. Skidmore spoke to the proposal of reducing two department chair positions. Mr. Skidmore stated that the elimination of two curriculum leadership positions to protect three teaching positions is shortsighted and harmful. In his memo

to the budget subcommittee and the curriculum subcommittee Ms. Skidmore urged the School Committee to leave the current administrative structure in place and to accept the cuts as proposed by the Superintendent.

The subcommittee also discussed what the most challenging curriculum issues are at the moment, the results of the year's focus on differentiated learning and how and if it has helped special education.

“ **Budget** – Ms. Owayda stated that two budgets have been sent to the Finance Committee, one with the override and one without the override. Ms. Owayda reported that the subcommittee discussed the FY05 budget versus the “no override” budget to determine the net loss of positions if the override does not pass; it was agreed that there would be a net loss of 27.81 FTE's from the current FY05 staffing.

Next the subcommittee discussed the FY06 budget. Mr. Thrope presented a proposal to combine the math and science department head into one position and the social studies and English language arts department heads into one position. The salary saved from the two department head teachers would be used to fund three special education positions. The budget subcommittee did not support the proposal.

The budget subcommittee made two motions, the 1st to look at the educational impact of department heads, curriculum leadership and Mr. Skidmore's desire for curriculum integration through additional planning time, the curriculum, instruction and assessment subcommittee. The 2nd motion addressed Ms. Rockmore's concern over the impact of cuts at AHS if the override does not pass. Voted to examine after the override, the funding between the kindergarten through 12th grade budgets for any inequities among the programs.

Community Relations The next scheduled meeting is June 1st at 3:00 PM.

Budget

Supt. Donovan reported that the Finance Committee has allocated \$120,000.00 in additional funds to the FY06 School Budget; Mrs. Donovan recommends using the funds to restore two special education positions and the assistant principal at the Ottoson Middle School.

“ Ms. Owayda made a motion seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Moved the Superintendent's recommendation on the use of the \$120,000.00 (restore two special education teachers and the Assistant Principal at the Ottoson Middle School).

Mr. Thrope presented to the Committee for consideration: the difference between the finance committee number and the cuts that we currently have in the “no override” budget total \$4,748.00 (excess amount) with the FC allocation of 120,000. In addition to the \$35,000. in the supt. contract fund now in the teacher salary account brings the total of available funds to 159,748. The funding of the 3 special education positions equal 136,000.00 and leaves a balance of \$23,748. Mr. Thrope stated that with the cuts in the athletic budget now totaling \$150,000. the athletic director position as well as the supporting clerical help should be cut to .6 making available from salary savings another 45,014. That makes available 68,762 to fund the Ottoson Middle School Assistant Principal with a shortfall of \$8538. for that position.

“ Mr. Thrope made a substitute motion seconded by Mr. Garballey that the no override budget be modified as follows: to use difference of \$4748.00 in excess cuts over the Finance committee's no override target, plus the \$120,000.00 allocated from the finance committee plus the \$35,000 from the supt. contract transferred into the teacher salary account fund plus the 45,014 from reductions in the athletic administration to .6 for a total of amount of funds available to \$159,748. The funds are to be used as follows: \$136,000 to be used for 3 special education teachers and \$68,762. to restore the Ottoson School administrative position with the \$8,538 salary shortfall to be identified by other sources by the administration such as projected FY05 surplus or projected salary exchange savings.

Mr. Schlichtman made a point of order that there was already a motion on floor. Mr. Thrope noted that it was a substitute motion.

Mr. Thielman stated that he could not vote on the proposal given the lack of time to review the numbers, Jeff did emphasize however that Supt. Donovan's proposal does include the restoration of two special education positions and the assistant principal at the OMS.

“ Mr. Thrope acknowledged that the committee has not had the time to digest the numbers and moved to postpone all actions until the next school committee meeting. . Roll Call: Mr. Garballey-yes, Ms. Lovelace- no, Mr. Schlichtman- no, Mr. Thrope-yes, Ms. Owayda- no, Mr. Thielman- no. Motion fails.

“ On Mr. Thrope's substitute motion by seconded by Mr. Garballey, 1-5 motions fails Mr. Thrope with the yes vote.

“ On Ms. Owayda's original motion seconded by Mr. Schlichtman
Voted the Superintendent's recommendation on the use and allocation of the \$120,000.00 (to restore two special education teachers and the Assistant Principal at the Ottoson Middle School). 5-1 Mr. Thrope-no.

Mr. Thielman stated that at the school committee meeting of May 24th the Superintendent would outline how the \$150,000.00 cuts in the athletic budget will be realized should the override fail.

VOTE REFERRAL OF STADIUM NAMING TO THE PUBLIC MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Thrope recommended that the naming of Donovan Stadium be referred to the public memorial committee for review.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Garballey it was

Voted to refer the naming of Donovan Stadium to the Public Memorial Committee. 6-0.

Ms. Owayda will write backup material to send to the Public Memorial Committee. Mr. Schlichtman did note that according to policy, the school committee does not rename.

Mr. Garballey proposed naming the high school track after John Kelly who was an AHS graduated, track star, and multi winner of the Boston Marathon.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to refer the naming of the AHS track to the Community Relations subcommittee; Mr. Garballey will assemble required documentation in accordance to policy FF/FFA/FFB. 6-0.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

- **Correspondence** Reviewed by Ms. Owayda who noted that Staff Appreciation Day will be held on May 25th at the Ottoson Middle School at 2:45 pm, a recognition honor of Supt. Donovan and Asst. Supt. Gurry at the OMS on Friday, June 17, 2005 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM and a save the date of June 23rd for Supt. Donovan, Asst. Supt. Gurry and Special Education Director Bisbicos at the Cambridge Marriott in Kendall Square.

- **Photo with the Selectmen – Monday May 16th at 7:30 p.m.**

- **Reminder of State of the Schools – Monday May 16th at 7:00 p.m.**

Suzanne reminded committee members of the upcoming Staff Recognition on May 25th at the Ottoson Middle School at 2:45 PM. Ms. Owayda also noted that there would be a reception in honor of Kay Donovan and Joanne Gurry for their service to APS at the Ottoson Middle School on Friday, June 17th from 5:00 – 7:00 PM. All are invited to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Lovelace attended the Fund the Future rally at the State House explaining that there was a huge turnout from across the State to advocate for increased funding of state aid. Ms. Lovelace noted that there were many grassroots groups asking the State for support for their communities.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted that the Arlington School Committee encourage and communicate to our state representatives and senators to increase METCO funds.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to name Committee member Susan Lovelace as the school committee representative to speak at Town Meeting on the naming of the stadium.

Supt. Donovan reported that the arbitration hearing that was held today was postponed indefinitely (after meeting for four hours).

Mr. Thielman requested a motion to enter executive session to discuss correspondence received from the AEA. Supt. Donovan stated that after speaking to school attorney Alan Miller he advised that the letter received from the AEA was not an appropriate issue to speak to in executive session; Mrs. Donovan stated that it could be discussed in open session if the Committee so desired.

Mr. Thrope questioned how the agency fee works.

Supt. Donovan explained that the teachers contract requires that you be a member of the unit/union and pay dues or you can choose not to be a member and pay an agency fee, which is some portion of the dues that represents the cost of i.e. negotiations or any administrative issues.

Mrs. Donovan was unaware of the amount of the agency fee but believed it was a good portion of whatever the dues are.

Mr. Thrope asked what our obligation and what happens if an employee does not pay the agency fee.

Mrs. Donovan stated that we collect dues if the membership asks through payroll deduction. Usually if they don't pay the dues or fee a letter or some type of notification is sent by the president of the AEA requesting payment

Mr. Thrope stated that according to the contract, refusal to pay dues or an agency fee is cause for termination of employment – has this ever happened?

Kay reported that there have been a few employees in past who did not pay their dues, they would hire a lawyer, the American civil liberties union would get involved and defend the employee, and at that point the (in the past) the union has dropped its case. (often times it is the last year of the employee's employment)

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to adjourn @ 10:15 PM.

Submitted by

Karen Tassone

Committee Secretary